2: Mitchell K-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

wounded human flesh.[1] They said that they had a strong headman and that they could trust him; he was a good headman without witchcraft. If he had been a sorcerer they would have kept wedding him until the next morning.

About two hours after sunrise the people gathered and started dancing. At about this time Cimombo was brought out of the hut and put in the grass shed which had been built for the occasion. This was the climax of the ceremony.[2] He sat on a chair in the grass shed with one of his two wives on either side. Makoka then started a chant, exhorting the visitors to come to throw pennies at Cimombo's feet. Some of the people there made speeches about the type of behaviour they would expect from him. Then Nyambi arrived from the court village in a rickshaw. When the noise had subsided he told the people that if they disobeyed Cimombo it meant that they disobeyed the chief. He emphasized the importance of the rank of the new headman. After the speech he presented £20 to Cimombo which was received on his behalf by Ntimbo. Nyambi then left and the ceremony was over, but the people remained to dance and drink beer.

This description of the procedure following the 'coming out of the hut' is somewhat sketchy. The interaction of the headman and his villagers on this formal and ceremonial occasion is of great interest and importance. During the entire ceremony the headman adopts the pose which is appropriate for any Yao initiand. His hands are on his lap or on the arms of the chair and his head is bowed forward with eyes downcast. He neither speaks nor moves. His attendants, when necessary, wipe the sweat off his face or chase away the flies. The other occupants of the mat, who may be his wives, and sometimes his heir, adopt similar postures. In contrast to this, is the behaviour of the villagers who run about shooting wildly, the men discharging muzzle-loading guns, and women ululating in the typical Central African way.

Before the new headman comes out of the hut his nsumwa

[1] This is a test based on the witchdance of the Yao, who believe that sorcerers kill relatives with magic and then dance over the flesh of their victims with blood-covered faces in ghoulish feast.

[2] Called the 'coming out from the hut' (kukapuka nyumba). It is of course the first public appearance of the headman in his newly assumed status.